



Fundraising Calendar

January

Typically, January is a slow fundraising month. Most nonprofits find that Nov-Dec is when they receive the most donations. Donors are also getting the credit card bills reminding them of how much they spent over the holidays. So January is a great time to get out all the receipts and thank you letters.

February

I like running a mailing in February. Things have quieted down so people may be more open to giving. If your nonprofit has *anything* to do with hearts, Valentine's Day can be a wonderful excuse for a mailing.

March

Again another good month for fundraising. If you haven't planned a mailing yet this year, get planning now. In the USA, late March or early April mailings can use the tax day theme. Some organizations like asking donors to consider using a portion of their tax return.

April

Another good month for asking. In many areas, golf tournaments start this month and don't stop until October.

May

Summer starts this month. So if you haven't gotten a letter out yet, do it now. Many organizations find that donors "lose focus" in the summer, so this is the last chance.

June

Often yearend for nonprofits. If it is, this can be a great excuse to mail. Most direct mail is looking for an excuse to get the letters out. Yearend is a great excuse. But don't use the "we won't meet our goal" guilt to motivate them. Most donors dislike manipulation.

Also, in the US, June is often full of weddings and graduations. So donors may not be as responsive as they are in other months.

If your year starts in July, you'll want to be finishing your new goals for the next fiscal year, even as you're trying to finish this year strong.

July

Like January, this is a great month to focus on thanking donors. It's also a great time to draft your fundraising letters for the year so you just need to dust them off when it's time to send them to the mailhouse.

August

People start getting into the swing. Could get a great time for a mailing if you'd like to get one in before your yearend mailing.

September

People are back in school and life is returning to normal now. A mailing in the first half of this month may be well received. Many nonprofits find this a great time to be setting up major gift solicitations—early enough for people to plan their year-end giving, but late enough in the year that yearend is a helpful deadline.

October

If you haven't drafted your yearend mailing strategy, do that early this month. You might want to do two: one in November post-Thanksgiving; one in the week between Christmas and New Year. This is also a great month for events—the weather in most regions is mild so you minimize the risk of canceling, and most school groups haven't yet scheduled performances.

November

The fourth quarter of the calendar year is *the most generous* time of the year. Set up appointments, mailing mailings, secure sponsorships for events even if those events aren't until the next calendar year. Holiday parties do tend to make scheduling events difficult. But one-on-one major gifts visits and mailings can do very well.

December

The most generous month of fundraising for those of us in North America. Be sure to have many "buckets" out to receive the gifts. Use social media to get your donation link in front of donors (and to help them pass the link on to their friends). Use snail mail, telephone, and face-to-face visits. Do whatever it takes to make this the best month.

Additional Thoughts

- **Events:** Just about any month has pro's and con's for events. You have to know your area and donors. Many nonprofits find it hard to hold events June – August. But others find this is precisely when their donors are around.
- **Major Giving:** Like events, face-to-face major giving can happen at just about any time of the year. Remember to meet with major gift donors to say "thank you" and to show them the impact *their* gift is making. This will help them know they made a good decision and will help them want to make it again and again.